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ABSTRACT

Four types of developmental education programs have been designed to help students overcome or compensate for: (1) deficiencies in grades or subjects required for admission to a senior institution or to colleges and transfer programs (Pre-Transfer); (2) deficiencies in reading, writing, speech, arithmetic, study habits, motivation, and other personality traits (Remedial); (3) deficiencies in literacy and in basic skill subjects necessary for a high school diploma (Adult Basic Education--ABE); and (4) physical or mental handicaps that impose limitations on the functioning of students academically or socially (Handicapped). The four types of programs support the traditional community college role in preparing the academically, economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged for entering the mainstream of American life. The present trend is toward integrating the various developmental programs with the regular programs. Pre-Transfer is most closely allied with the regular program and ABE least integrated. The Remedial Program tends to focus on high school graduates or recent dropouts who are slightly older than the regular students. The Handicapped Program includes three principal classifications of students: the blind or visually handicapped, the deaf or hearing impaired, and the mobility-impaired. (Author/MB)

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ERIC JUNIOR COLLEGE RESOURCE REVIEW

March 1979

FOUR PHASES OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

by

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
Arthur M. Cohen, *Principal Investigator and Director*

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FOUR PHASES OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Developmental education is a major segment of the community college educational program, including curriculum and student support services. Originally, Developmental education focused on the academically disadvantaged students who for a "variety of social, economic, and ethnic-interracial factors" were unable to exercise "full-freedom of choice" and participate in "upward mobility" (Morrison and Ferrante, [1973c], p. 2). Today, Developmental education incorporates a broader segment of students who need help to "overcome any deficiencies they may have in their preparation for post-secondary education" (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975, p. 5). This definition is broad enough to include the curriculum of every two-year public college, for there is none that does not offer some Developmental education courses in English, reading, speech, mathematics or arithmetic, as well as special counseling, tutoring and assistance in study laboratories.

Types of Programs

Although *Developmental* and *Remedial* are used interchangeably in both practice and the literature, *Developmental* usually refers to a program of courses or to a group of students. Remedial most often refers to individual courses or students. In this paper Developmental refers to four programs designed to help students overcome or compensate for:

1. Deficiencies in grades or subjects required for admission to a senior institution or to colleges and transfer programs (Pre-Transfer);
2. Deficiencies in reading, writing, speech, arithmetic, study habits, motivation and other personality traits (Remedial);
3. Deficiencies in literacy and in basic skill subjects necessary for a high school diploma (Adult Basic Education);
4. Physical or mental handicaps that impose limitations on the functioning of students academically or socially (Handicapped).

The trend is toward integrating the various Developmental programs with the regular programs. The degree of integration depends upon the nature of the students' deficiencies, the required faculty qualifications, the learning system, funding sources and other factors. Considerable overlapping occurs between programs.

The *Pre-Transfer* Program is the most closely allied with the regular program. Students are high school graduates who tend to be in the same age group as the transfer students. The non-transfer courses — English composition, elementary and intermediate algebra, plane geometry, foreign languages, and sciences — are college credit courses, an integral part of the departmental offerings, taught by the regular faculty, and funded in the same manner as the regular transfer courses. This is the oldest Developmental program, dating back to the origins of the junior college.

At the opposite extreme is the *Adult Basic Education* (ABE) Program of courses in reading, language, arithmetic, and English as a Second Language (ESL). These courses are of an elementary or high school level for illiterates or students who wish to qualify for a high school diploma through the General Educational Development (GED) tests.

A transplant from the adult high school, the ABE Program is a recent addition to the community college curriculum, and unlike the mixed reaction encountered by Remedial programs, the ABE Program has aroused little unfavorable reaction, probably because as a separate, non-college program it does not impinge on the college program. ABE students average about 30 years of age and attend classes on a part-time basis, usually in the late afternoon or evenings (Johnson, 1976; Witter, 1978). Most of the instructors are part-timers, many with special qualifications.

The *Remedial* Program, the most widely-known of the four, ranges from the elementary to the collegiate in curriculum content. Often it is organized as a separate entity with a special name such as Project Search (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975), People Center (Colston, 1976), Project II (Fishman and Dugan, [1976]), Upward Bound (Morrison and Ferrante, 1973a), PACE — Personalized Approach to College Education (Carter, 1976). The students are usually high school graduates or recent dropouts and are slightly older than the regular students. They have higher educational qualifications than the ABE students and lower scholastic aptitude than the Pre-Transfer.

Criteria for admission to Remedial courses or programs vary widely from compulsory placement to voluntary placement with a number of persuasive strategies in between. In a study of 137 midwestern colleges Ferrin (1971) found that standardized test scores were most critical in selecting students for Remedial courses or programs. The Community College of Philadelphia strongly advised students scoring below the 20th percentile in the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills reading section to enter Project II (Fishman and Dugan, [1976]) while Florida Junior College defined remedial students as persons who scored below the 10th grade reading level on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Cosby, 1974). For the People Center of Staten Island Community College low self-image and poor performance expectations were the requirements (Colston, 1976).

Remedial programs that have special funding tend to be segregated. These may be composed of one or two classes or a group of classes for a large number of students, sometimes exceeding 500 (Colston, 1976). Many states provide additional funding for operating expenses and for student aid. Practitioners and researchers differ about the relative merits of integrated and segregated programs, with little evidence to support the greater effectiveness of the one over the other (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975).

For a variety of reasons, Remedial education has become associated with education for minorities. Part of this perception results from the large emphasis in the literature on the ethnicity of students and from the numerous public and foundation grants for recruiting minority students and for learning projects involving minorities. Also contributing to the stereo-

type is that "minority students are more highly represented in [such programs] than in the student body as a whole" (Ferrin, 1971, p. 8) and that a higher proportion of minority students are in programs (1 in 5) than in courses (1 in 9). Both figures, however, indicate that more white students than minority students are enrolled in Remedial courses and programs.

The *Handicapped* Program includes three principal classifications of students: the blind or visually impaired, the deaf or hearing impaired, and the mobility-impaired. Within this group are many shades of impairment from those who can function with very little assistance to those who have "no useable speech . . . no mobility . . . no writing capacity" (Katz and Flugman, 1977), and a wide range of scholastic aptitude from the highly gifted to the mentally retarded (Florida State Department of Education, 1977). The average age of handicapped students is over 26 years, with a range of 18-56. Men outnumber women (Spencer and Others, 1977).

Except for the more seriously handicapped students, the goal of the Handicapped Program is integration in all activities. Success in this goal depends upon the availability of "special services not offered to other students and/or intensified services . . . for . . . successful functioning" (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975, p. 42), e.g., ramps, elevators, special parking, advanced registration, readers, writers, test proctors; mobility orientation, modified physical education activities (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975; Ingalls, 1978; Los Angeles City College, 1978).

Due to such special factors as militancy of the handicapped (Bennett, 1978), humanitarian appeal, awareness of college personnel to the special needs of the handicapped, and state and federal legislation, Handicapped programs are expanding at a higher rate than the other programs. The militancy of the handicapped has resulted in broader and more prescriptive legislation than the older rehabilitation acts. Section 504 of the federal 1973 Rehabilitation Act which states "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual . . . shall . . . be excluded from participation in . . . any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Peirce, 1978, p. 5) is for the handicapped a Bill of Rights "to an education, to services, to equality on campuses, and to employment" (Katz and Flugman, 1977, p. 19). In addition, Congress increased appropriations for 1979-80 by 57 percent from $623 million to $976 million (Neill, 1978).

The militancy of the handicapped and the interpretation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is leading to conflicts between the colleges and those handicapped students who wish to enroll in programs for which the colleges believe they are unqualified because of physical disabilities. A case involving such a dispute between a deaf practical nurse who wants to enroll in a registered nursing program at Southeastern Community College (N.C.) has reached the Supreme Court on appeal from a lower court ruling favoring the student. The case is considered important enough for 27 states and the American Council on Education to join Southeastern in the appeal, in order to get answers to such questions as: "Does Section 504 . . . require institutions to admit [handicapped] persons if their disabilities make it impossible for them to 'participate effectively in the educational program and the career to which it leads?' " ("Washington Notes . . .," 1978, p. 10); and "Does Section 504 guarantee the handicapped's 'right to access to the same facilities other people use, regardless of cost?' " (Peirce, 1978, p. 5). A report of a workshop on "Mainstreaming: Competence and Performance" obliquely touches on this issue (Katz and Flugman, 1977).

Enrollments

Because of the absence of distinct program parameters, enrollment in the four Developmental programs is difficult to even estimate. Handicapped students, for example, may be enrolled in any of Developmental programs as well as the regular Transfer, Occupational or Adult Education programs. Sometimes a student may be enrolled or classified in two or more of the programs. Further confusing the issue is the fact that Adult and Adult Basic Education enrollments are combined in some states, while pre-transfer and remedial students are reported as college-credit enrollments (Lombardi, 1978).

Some figures do exist, however. In response to a 1977 questionnaire 25 colleges reported enrollments of 1,795 full-time and 255 part-time handicapped students, and 18 of 25 stated that enrollments of the disabled increased over the previous year. Other indications of enrollment (not exclusively community college) were the estimates of 675 to 700 blind students in over 100 campuses across the country and 9000 handicapped students in training in New York colleges (Katz and Flugman, 1977).

As a result of the widespread interest in Remedial education, data are more plentiful than in the other Developmental programs. Research and official state reports reveal that the number and proportion of students is large. In general, it may be conjectured that the statistics are on the conservative side, since few colleges, except when seeking grants, overstate the number of students enrolled in Remedial courses.

In a survey of 137 midwestern colleges in 11 states, Ferrin (1971) reported that approximately 40,000 students (12 percent of 333,000) were enrolled in some form of Remedial education. Enrollments in the 16 college programs described in the report ranged from 100 to 1,500. Six of the colleges enrolled over 500 students. One college reported that over 40 percent of the students were enrolled in its Learning Skills Center; another that 15 percent were enrolled in the Remedial Program. Three years later, Morrison and Ferrante found all the colleges surveyed (American Council on Education sample) had "special courses . . . and/or . . . special services for the academically disadvantaged" (1973b, p. 19) although only "60 percent indicated that . . . students [were] enrolled in developmental, preparatory or remedial programs" (1973b, p. 14).

Florida colleges enrolled 31,700 students in Compensatory (Remedial) and 41,200 in Adult Elementary and Secondary programs in 1975-76, about 14 percent of the total enrollment of more than half a million (Florida State Department of Education, 1977). In Fall 1976, Illinois colleges enrolled 36,000 or 12 percent of the total enrollment (326,000) in Remedial/Developmental and 38,000 or slightly more than 12 percent in General Studies, which includes ABE and other student categories (Illinois Community College Board, 1976). ABE enrollment in Iowa colleges in 1975-76 amounted to 3,600 full-time equivalent students (FTEE) or 8 percent of the total FTEE of 43,800 (Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, [1976]).

To summarize enrollment in the four Developmental *programs* approximates 10 to 15 percent of the total college enrollment, a percentage that is likely to decrease if colleges tighten admission and academic standards and if they move away from segregated programs. Enrollment in Developmental *courses* approaches the 30 percent mark, and for large inner city colleges, the percentage may reach 50.

Program Impact

Developmental courses will increase as more colleges add courses in ABE and Handicapped programs. The potential enrollment in the Handicapped will be modest in contrast to that of the ABE enrollment, which, in ten years, has grown dramatically in Florida, Illinois, Iowa and other states. Annually, about 400,000 (not all trained in the community colleges), take the G.E.D. tests, a tiny fraction of the estimated 62 million Americans who do not have a high school diploma (Witter, 1978). To tap this large group, colleges are establishing learning centers for preparation for the General Educational Development tests on campuses, in the traditional storefronts (Fishman and Dugan, [1976]), and in workplaces where

management cooperates with the college (Witter, 1978).

Of the four Developmental programs reviewed in this paper, the Pre-Transfer and the Handicapped are accepted as proper responsibilities of the community college by the public and college personnel; the former because it is closely related to the Transfer program and the latter because of sympathy, humanitarian impulses, compulsory aspects in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and generous financial support from state and federal governments.

The effectiveness of these programs varies with the expectations for the various disabilities. A good deal depends upon the experience in mainstreaming the handicapped in and out of the college (Katz and Flugman, 1977; Bennett, 1978). Strict interpretation of Section 504 may create situations in which very severely handicapped students will be given custodial, rather than, educational services.

While ABE programs have aroused little internal opposition, remedial programs have elicited considerable opposition. Moore, for example, notes that "few teachers can, or want to, teach [remedial students] at the college level, even fewer understand him, many reject him academically and socially" (Aarons, 1975, p. 1). A newspaper reporter states, "Taxpayers and legislators are beginning to object to paying college prices for public institutions that provide large numbers of remedial students with what is essentially high school education" (Beck, 1978, p. 15). This disaffection is serious enough to cause Gleazer to express strong disagreement with those who propose turning back "responsibility for inadequately prepared students . . . to the elementary and secondary schools" (Aarons, 1975, p. 2).

Also, indicative of the attitude toward Remedial education is the movement for stricter admission standards, reintroduction of punitive grades, and enforcement of probation and disqualification policies. These measures apply to all students, but they bear most heavily on remedial students.

Inadequate knowledge on how to teach remedial students, and lack of understanding of their learning problems also feed this negative attitude. Since college instructors have little training for teaching remedial students (Moore, 1976), some colleges are trying to remedy this deficiency by inservice and staff development programs (Colston, 1976; Morrison and Ferrante, 1973b).

Numerous experiments have been conducted on the effectiveness of Remedial education. Positive outcomes are reported for three-fourths of the midwestern college students by Ferrin (1971). A lower dropout rate, a higher grade point average and a higher percent of completed courses differentiate students in the Pace Program at Community College of the Finger Lakes from a control group (Carter, 1976). On the negative side are Moore, Gordon and Wilkerson (in Ferrin, 1971), Jelfo (Cuyahoga Community College, 1975), and Losack (in Aarons, 1975). Roueche and Mink (1975) acknowledge that some programs maintain high retention rates but deplore the accelerated attrition among remedial students who enter the traditional programs.

The four phases of Developmental education are in the tradition of the community college. Each has as its aim preparing the academically, economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged for entering the mainstream of American life through preparation for further education or through preparation for work. Though there is considerable disaffection with various parts of these programs, there is every indication that state and federal policy supports this role for the community college, a support made evident in legislation and in the financial inducements given to the colleges. It is worthy of note that the California Legislature gave a high priority to Remedial and ABE Education when it distributed surplus funds to the colleges after Proposition 13. Other states, e.g., Florida, Illinois, New York, are also encouraging colleges to offer Developmental programs.

Taken as a group, the four phases of Developmental education constitute a large segment of the curriculum effort of the colleges. The likelihood is that they will grow to 50 percent within the next decade. Despite criticisms, they persist in keeping aloft "a lamp beside the golden door" for today's disadvantaged.

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